



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
6200 Jefferson NE, Room 305  
Albuquerque, NM 87109  
Phone: (505) 761-4402 Fax: (505) 761-4463  
Web site: [www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov)

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## ***News Release***

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Contact: Barbara Garrett, public affairs officer  
(505)761-4406

### **Guide Seeks to Reduce Risks of Seeding Native Grass**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM – The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is announcing the release of its new publication, “Seeding Native Grasses in the Arid Southwest.” This booklet presents the important factors that influence the success of seeding native grasses in the arid and semi-arid climates of New Mexico and neighboring states.

“Native grass seeding is an uncertain endeavor even in the best of circumstances, but in the arid Southwest it is an extremely risky venture,” said David Dreesen, agronomist at the NRCS Los Lunas Plant Materials Center and the publication’s author.

NRCS hopes that while farmers, ranchers, and other conservationists are planning their 2009 cropping season, they will refer to this publication when contemplating the use of native grass seed for erosion control, riparian restoration, wildlife habitat, and other conservation uses. Since native grasses may also be used for landscaping, this publication may be of benefit to the urban dweller, too.

Written for public consumption while including sound technical information, the publication focuses on the factors that affect success – paying particular attention to the role moisture plays in seeding native grasses.

“A common mistake in seeding warm season native grasses in New Mexico is planting in the spring,” said Dreesen. “To maximize the chances of seedling establishment, native grass seeding needs a window of moisture that lasts about six weeks - which is most likely to occur in New Mexico during the monsoon season. Therefore, seeding just before the July and during the August rains typically offers the best chances of success.”

Other factors that influence the chance of success that are discussed include seeding depth, dormancy and emergence, soil compaction, seed to soil particle contact, mulching, soil texture, weed control, and the cool- or warm-season nature of the species.

“Seeding Native Grasses in the Arid Southwest” is available online at [www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov) or by contacting your local NRCS Field Office.

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